

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 416 292

UD 032 159

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 TITLE Gender and School Education.
 INSTITUTION Australian Council for Educational Research, Victoria.
 SPONS AGENCY Australian Dept. of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Canberra.
 ISBN ISBN-0-644-47307-X
 PUB DATE 1996-00-00
 NOTE 213p.
 AVAILABLE FROM Commonwealth Information Services, Australian Government Publishing Service, GPO Box 84, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory, Australia 2601.
 PUB TYPE Books (010) -- Reports - Evaluative (142)
 EDRS PRICE Document Not Available from EDRS.
 DESCRIPTORS Elementary School Students; Elementary Secondary Education; *Equal Education; Foreign Countries; Minority Groups; *Nondiscriminatory Education; Private Schools; Public Schools; *School Role; Secondary School Students; *Sex Fairness; *Sexual Harassment; Student Attitudes
 IDENTIFIERS *Australia

ABSTRACT

The Gender and School Education study was undertaken to collect baseline data against which progress in implementing the National Policy for the Education of Girls in Australian Schools can be measured. The study was designed to provide data on gender matters related to boys as well as girls. A total of 408 schools across Australia were involved: 213 primary schools and 195 secondary schools. Questionnaires were completed by an average of 6 teachers and 25 students per sample school for actual samples of 1,097 primary teachers, 1,465 secondary teachers, 4,969 year-6 students, and 4,855 year-10 students. Schools from all three sectors--government, Catholic, and independent--were represented. Findings provide a wide range of data on how students experience gender in the schools, with sex-based harassment by other students not uncommon, and some gender discrimination still existing in the schools. However, the study offers evidence that attention to gender issues by systems, schools, and individual teachers does make a difference to the gender experience of students in schools. For example, the proportion of students reporting sexual harassment was considerably lower in states that had given continuous and careful attention to this issue. Much remains to be done, however, to ensure the development of all students regardless of gender. An appendix contains the study questionnaires. (Contains 49 tables, 18 figures, and 40 references.) (SLD)

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